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## THE HIGH PRIEST'S PROCESSION ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

THE safe exit of the High Priest from the innermost recess of the Temple on the Day of Atonement has always been considered the most capital event in ancient Israel's religious life. The awe-inspiring mystery of the place whereto only once in a twelvemonth one man was allowed access, and the belief that the ceremony being performed without accident was a token of the granted requests and wishes of the nation were facts of too great importance not to strike the fancy of the faithful after the dispersion.

Still, any contemporary record of the way in which the happy occurrence was solemnized is absolutely wanting. The Bible contains not the slightest hint at a festivity in that connexion, and Philo and Josephus keep also silent on the subject. In the Mishna, Yoma VII. 2, we find the statement that the High Priest was seen home by the congregation, and used to give a feast when he came out from the Holy Shrine in safety. The feast, *יום טוב*, apparently consisted of a banquet to which only *his friends*, *לאוהביו*, or *all his friends*, *לכל אוהביו*, were invited. The Jerusalem Gemara adds nothing in the way of illustration, and we find in the Babylonian the account of a large crowd once parting with the High Priest as soon as it comes across the great masters Shemaiah and Abtalion, which affront could hardly be done to the high dignitary if the procession bore any official character and was formally organized.

As with all traditions lending themselves to legendary developments, the farther we go from the time and scene of the historical fact, the more it is enriched with particulars derived from the inventiveness of writers. It is, however, surprising that on a theme like this imagination has played so sober a part. So Rabbenu Asher supplements the above particulars of the Mishna only by adding that the procession included the leaders and magnates of the nation, *ראשי העם וגדולי*. In the prayer-books of nearly all rites we find one or more poems following the description of the service within the Temple, and they all are with the refrain—

Blissful the eye that watched all this,  
The mere hearing of it fills our souls with sorrow,

but with the exception of Ibn Ghebirol's, Aben Ezra's, and Jehuda Halevy's verses, no breath of true poetry is noticeable in these compositions. The authors mentioned, too, do no more than magnify the appearance of the High Priest whose face used to shine like gems, the sun and stars, and the messengers of God.

Full particulars of a pageant are supplied by a fragment of a Corfu MS. now in my hands which cannot be earlier than the latter half of the sixteenth century. The MS. to which the fragment belonged was in the main the prayer-book after the Romania rite, **מחזור רומניא**—of which three editions (Venice and Constantinople, xvi and xvii centuries) are known, and a manuscript copy is cursorily mentioned by Zunz in p. 102 of *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*,—but it contained also many pieces borrowed from the Spanish liturgy, which had already begun to get grafted on the Greek rite until it supplanted it altogether. After the description of which we will speak presently, the most important feature of this fragment is the commentary on the Aboda, **אדרת תלבושת**, which in places is in a more expanded form than that published in the **מחזור רומניא**. We cannot say with a certainty whether this is the only copy referred to by Zunz in the above-mentioned passage of his work; but, as a matter of fact, no other MS. with this commentary is entered in any catalogue of public libraries<sup>1</sup>.

An unknown poet is also revealed to us by this fragment as the author of a **תהנן**, beginning with the words **מפני כובר עוני**. According to the inscription his name would be **מישו**, but the initials of the four stanzas composing the poem form **מישוח**. Each stanza consists of ten lines rhyming alternately, the number of syllables is six, seven, or eight, with no set rule, and, with a few exceptions, all its phrases are borrowed from the Bible and linked together with taste and much correctness. An erroneous expression, **תִּרְחִיב צִרוֹת לִבִּי**, having as subject the enemy of Israel, was evidently suggested by **תִּרְחִיבו צִרוֹת לִבִּי** of Ps. xxv. 17, where modern criticism would rightly

<sup>1</sup> My article was set in type long before I had the good fortune of seeing Mr. E. N. Adler's MS. 461, which is a complete prayer-book for the Day of Atonement, written in Corfu at a later date than the one from which my fragment was taken off, and very probably a copy of the same. Mr. Adler's MS. is also supplied with the account of the High Priest's pageant, and a commentary on the **אדרת תלבושת** Aboda, differing both from that known through the editions and from the one described by me, which is the fullest extant.—To Mr. Adler's MS. is appended a list of circumcisions operated by a Moel of Corfu which could be profitably used in a possible investigation into the history of the Jewish Community of that town. The earliest recorded circumcision is of the year 1660.

propose the emendation הָרַחֵב with *thou* (God) as subject. To meet the requirements of meaning and rhyme שִׁשְׁנֵי must be restored in the place of a שִׁשְׁנֵי.

It was a general belief in the East that the Aboda חֲלוּבוֹשֶׁת was the work of Shelomo Ibn Ghebirol. We find this error recorded both in our MS. and the printed edition of the מחזור רומניא, but, strangely enough, the latter supplies the additional information that the same poetical account was composed by R. Jehuda Hababli, and the conflicting statements are slurred over without any notice. The words פִּירוּשָׁה וּכְתַבְתִּי which in our fragment precede the text and commentary would lead to the belief that the copyist of this MS. was the author of the commentary, and chronological considerations would not stand against his identification with הכהן יוסף בן אברהם הכהן, a Corfiote scholar who, in the year 1598, published in Constantinople a commentary on the הושענות of the Romania rite.

The account of the pageant which forms the principal subject of this article seems also to be from the pen of the learned copyist. At first sight we should think that the phrase מִצָּאֵתִי כְתוּב occurring at the beginning was used by the author for the purpose of surrounding his account with the halo of antiquity, and thus securing to it credit and authority. In fact, the ceremony he purports to describe is on the whole a retrospective adaptation to ancient Judaism of the pageants he must have witnessed either in Corfu or in Venice; perhaps he found the prototype of it in the solemn reception which every new Roman Catholic Archbishop was accorded when he first landed in Corfu, and in which the representatives of the Jewish community were bound to take an official part. There is, however, one item which forces the belief that Byzantine customs had their share of influence upon the mind of our author. We refer to the mention made in the parade of a class of dignitaries known under the name of קֶאֶרְטוֹפִּילֹס, for the identification of which we would in vain look in the specification of Venetian hierarchy. In Constantinople, however, besides the one χαρτοφύλαξ who fulfilled duties of secretary to the Patriarch there were a number of officials with this title whose task in the government of the country was similar to that of the Cabinet Ministers in our day (see Du Cange, *Glossarium . . . mediae et infimae Graecitatis*). Moreover, the distinction between the זרע מלכי זֶרַע מַלְכֵי described as akin (הִקְרַב הַקָּרֵב) to the High Priest on one hand, and the descendants of the מלכי בית דוד on the other, would take us as far back as the epoch of the Maccabeans, whom one feels tempted to recognize under the expression "the Kings of Israel's offspring," which without a construction of this kind would yield no satisfactory meaning.

All these considerations afford reasonable ground for the hypothesis that the words **מצאתי כתוב** contain a certain amount of truth and are to be taken in the sense that our author knew some older descriptions, more imaginary than otherwise, of which he has preserved a particular or two in his own composition. The medal said to have been struck year by year in order to commemorate the entry of the High Priest into the Most Holy is an invention of our author. The alleged inscription was too long to be included within the narrow area of a small piece of metal, and the wish for the rebuilding of the Temple expressed in it is an anachronism.

The only changes we made in the transcription of this curious piece are the division into paragraphs, and the addition of punctuation and numbers to show in a clearer way the order of the procession. In line 7, **בסדר** was substituted for **כסדר**, and in line 9 the repetition of **אלפים**, due to dittography, was omitted.

מצאתי כתוב, בצאתו כהן גדול מבית קדש הקדשים כל העם אשר בירושלים היו עוברים לפניו, ורובם באבוקות של שעוה לבנה דולקות, וכולם מלובשים בגדי לבן, וכל החלונות מרוקמות ומעוטות ברקמה ומלאות נרות, ומליין אותו לביתו.

ראשונה הולכין לפניו <sup>1</sup> כל שהוא מזרע מלכי ישראל, כי הקרב הקרב אל הכהן הוא יותר חשוב, <sup>2</sup> ואחריהם כל אותם שהם ממלכי בית דוד, וכלם בסדר נכון זה אחר זה, וכרוז לפניהם אומר תנו כבוד לבית דוד, <sup>3</sup> ואחריהם היה בית הלוי והכרוז אומר תנו כבוד לבית לוי, ושלשים אלף וששת אלפים היו <sup>4</sup> ואחריהם המשוררים, <sup>5</sup> ואחריהם המנגנים, <sup>6</sup> ואחריהם תוקעי חצוצרות [וכל סגני הלויים לובשים באותה שעוה בגדי משי תכלת והכהנים משי לבן והיו ארבעה ועשרים אלף] <sup>7</sup> ואחריהם השוערים, <sup>8</sup> ואחריהם עושי הקטורת, <sup>9</sup> ואחריהם עושי הפרוכיות, <sup>10</sup> ואחריהם השומרים, <sup>11</sup> ואחריהם כל האמרכלים, <sup>12</sup> ואחריהם כת אחת נקרא (sic) קארטופילוס, <sup>13</sup> ואחריהם כל אנשי המלאכה ממלאכת הקדש, <sup>14</sup> ואחריהם השבעים סנהדרין, <sup>15</sup> ואחריהם מאה כהנים וגורי כסף בידם לעשות דרך, <sup>16</sup> ואחריהם הכהן גדול, <sup>17</sup> ואחריו כל זקני הכהונה שנים שנים.

והרבה מהשנים לא היה כהן גדול יכול להגיע לביתו עד חצות הלילה מפני דוחק העם העובר ורבויו הגדול, שא"עפי שהין כולם מתענים לא היו הולכים לבתיהם עד יראו אם יוכלו להגיע לנשק ידי הכהן גדול, יוביום שאחריו היה עושה סעודה גדולה ומזמן לאוהביו וקרוביו ועניי העיר. (וכן חייב כל אדם שעושה סעודה של מצוה בין ממילה בין מחופה)

וכיוצא בהן לזמן עניים בסעודתו, אשר לזה כיון הפסוק הלא פרום לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית, ועוד ג"כ אחר מיתתו של אדם שואלין אותו, טול מה שאכלת ולא נתת לעני ממנו, וכרסו נבקעת ופרשו עולה לפיו, יען שלא נתת לחמך לעני, ולא לחנם צונו בחורה הענק תעניק ושמיטת שביעית וספיחי קציר ושביחת עומר ועוללות הכרם וכיוצא בו משום העניים, ולכן גם כהן הגדול היה מזמן בסעודתו העניים).

ויום טוב היה עושה לפי שיצא בשלום מבית קדש הקדשים, אחר זה היה מצוה לעשות לו הצורף לוח מזהב ומפתח בה זה הלשון "אני פלוני כהן גדול בן פלוני הכהן גדול שמשתי בכהונה גדולה בבית הגדול והקדוש שתו"בב או"ר לעבודת מי ששכן שמו שם, והיה זה שנת כך וכך ליצירה, מי שזיכני בעבודה זו הוא יזכה בני אחרי לשרת לפני יי אמן כן יהי רצון".

L. BELLELL.